

# Canine Bulletin

Nebraska Task Force - 1

September 2001

## A New Playground!

Submitted by: Deborah Goodman and One Soc

We all know how important it is to work our canines in unfamiliar places. How many times have we heard said (and stopped ourselves from saying) "He does it great at home." It's so true. Once our canines become familiar with an area, their performance accelerates. This is a good thing... it is how they learn! Initially when we take them to new places for training, we back up a step or two in our training program to help them be successful and learn. It takes time, travel, and training to build a canine that is confident working amidst the chaos we will face in a disaster situation. We must help them by training them in many new places, and exposing them to many different situations to help them gain the experience needed to become a solid working canine.

Due to the support of Joe Horne and Johnson County Aggregates in Olathe, Kansas, we have gained a new training site. These wonderful folks have granted us permission to work in their quarry. They even made a road for us so our "little vehicles" wouldn't get stuck!! It has much to offer! The expansive size, rock bluffs, and multiple rubble piles make for interesting scenting problems for the dogs, and "thinking" problems for handlers! If you don't know where the victim is located, you'd better have a search plan or you'll waste a lot of energy. (Ask me how I know this!)

Words to the wise; Lesson #1... things aren't always what they seem. What looked like a crystal clear lake turned out to be a lime pit!!! One Soc saw an opportunity to go for a dip, and before I could call him back he waded in. Much to his surprise and mine, when he turned around and came out he looked like he had plaster casts on all 4 legs! What a mess! Lesson #2... ALWAYS bring plenty of drinking water. It took almost our whole supply to get those "casts" off his legs!



Top Left: Elaine, Ditto, Deb, One Soc, Vince & Twister  
Top Right: Deb and One Soc - devising a search plan.



Above: Deb, Joe Horne, Elaine, One Soc and Ditto  
Right: After a lengthy search Ditto nails it!



Twister finds Deb in the barrel.

## One Dog – One Job

Submitted by: Elaine Sawtell

The NE-TF1 Canine Search Guide has been revised to reflect a change in the cadaver policy. The revised policy reads:

Since the mission of the task force is to locate live trapped victims, handlers are not encouraged to engage in cadaver training with their live victim dog. Canine who have cadaver training will have cadaver distractions regularly included in alert barrel and rubble search problems.

The rationale for this change is the concern that a dog may give a live alert on a dead victim. This is likely to happen in the stress of a real mission where the dog may be tired or faced with a confusing scent picture. Likewise, the handler under these conditions is more apt to misread or precipitate an alert.

Discussions with handlers across the country who have years of experience in training both disciplines as well as actual searches lead to the conclusion one dog - one job.

Many of us came into the FEMA program with a background of wilderness and cadaver search and multiple missions. We have experienced that dogs often do not give the distinct alert in the Real World that we have perfected in practice. The disaster scenario by its nature almost always involves dead and, hopefully, live victims in the same setting. A dog without extensive, ongoing training in both live and dead search may blur his alerts. This is a case where “a Little knowledge” can be dangerous as the dog tries to sort out what he’s looking for.

Our priority for the sake of possible survivors must be live search. We need

### Woman on mend after dog fends off alligator

FORT MYERS, Fla. — A 2-year-old Australian blue heeler scared off an alligator after his 85-year-old owner slipped on wet grass and lay in her backyard unable to move.

“I think he probably saved me,” Ruth Gay said from her hospital bed in Fort Myers on Friday, where she was recovering from two broken shoulders.

Gay was walking the dog Tuesday night about 50 feet from a canal where three 6- to 12-foot alligators had been spotted earlier. Gay slipped and lay immobilized for more than an hour. Blue lay alongside her but started growling and scampered off into the darkness where Gay heard fighting.

The scrappy, 35-pound dog sustained numerous puncture and bite wounds, the largest a three-inch stomach gash.

Submitted by: Chance Sawtell  
Springfield Newsleader Newspaper  
July 7, 2001

to prevent, if possible, committing valuable time and resources and possibly endangering rescue personnel for a victim that is beyond help.

All of our deployable teams need practice with distractions of all kinds, including cadaver. And, of course, we can’t “untrain” or erase previous cadaver training experience, whether limited or extensive. But incorporating cadaver on a regular basis in training scenarios will help assure the handler his dog is performing his primary search function first.

## How Do I Submit Items for the Canine Bulletin?

Mail, E-mail, or Fax items to:

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# Changes

Also contact

Julie



If you have any questions about this change in policy, please feel free to contact me.



Mail your training logs to:

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